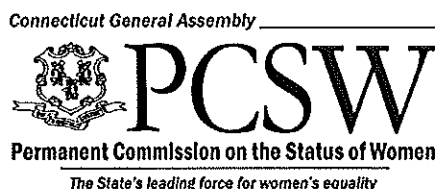


COMMISSION OFFICERS
Antonia "Toni" Moran, *Chair*
Melanie O'Brien, *Vice Chair*
Mary Lee A. Kiernan, *Secretary*
Denise Rodosevich, *Treasurer*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Teresa C. Younger



COMMISSIONERS
Lucia A. Aschettino
JoAnn Calnen
Mayor April Capone
Yvonne R. Davis
Barbara DeBaptiste
Adrienne Farrar Hotiel
Kristin A. LaFleur
Jean L. Rexford
Helene Shay
Patricia E.M. Whitcombe
Cecilia J. Woods

HONORARY MEMBERS
Connie Dice
Patricia T. Hendel
Patricia Russo

Testimony of
Teresa C. Younger
Executive Director
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Labor and Public Employees Committee
March 13, 2012

Re: SB 352, AA Creating a Process for Family Child Care Providers to Collectively Bargain with the State
HB 5433, AA Creating a Procedure for Personal Care Attendants to Collectively Bargain with the State

Senators Prague and Guglielmo, Representatives Zalaski and Rigby, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) regarding the above referenced bills.

The PCSW supports passage of S.B. 352 and H.B. 5433, which would allow collective bargaining in two female-dominated jobs, childcare and personal care. According to our last report 79% of home health aides and 98% of family care providers are women. The issues highlighted in these bills have been important pieces to the PCSW's agenda towards building economic security for women. I will speak specifically to S.B. 352 because I sat on the *Family Child Care Working Group* to address this issue.

Childcare is a significant issue for women in two ways. First, working women need it to participate in the workforce. In Connecticut women represent 48% of the workforce,¹ and both spouses in 58.1% of married-couple families work.² Second, women dominate the childcare workforce.

Most families in Connecticut spend 30% to 40% of their income on childcare.³ It is no wonder that many seek out family childcare providers who typically are less expensive than center-based childcare. Not only is family childcare cheaper, but it provides additional benefits:

- It offers an intimate setting for infants and toddlers;
- Is frequently located close to home or work;

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Fact Finder, Connecticut Employment Characteristics of Families.

³ Diana M. Pearce, Ph.D. *Overlooked and Undervalued: Where Connecticut Stands*.

- Offers cultural and linguistic continuity for children;
- Provides flexible care during non-traditional hours, such as evenings and weekends; and,
- Permits multiple ages so siblings can attend the same program.

According to Connecticut Voices for Children's *2011 Early Care and Education Progress Report*,⁴ there are approximately 2,675 licensed family child care providers in the state of Connecticut, with the capacity to serve 22,936 children (211 Child Care). In addition to these providers, there are 2,400 family, friend and neighbor caregivers listed in the Care4Kids registry, plus an unknown number who informally care for the children of their relatives, neighbors, and friends. These providers are in essence micro-enterprises, home based businesses. The income provided by the services helps them pay their mortgage, oil and food expenses.

We have heard from many women that they enjoy and take great pride in the role they play in society as family child care providers. However over 2,400 child care providers do not have a collective way to have their voices heard. While sitting on the working group and through our 2001 public hearings on the Economic Status of Workers in Caregiving Professions, we heard from women who expressed concerns over:

- Concerns over delayed payments and slow approval process
- Streamlining and speeding up payment process
- Increasing reimbursement rates
- Ongoing financial constraints on providers due to the existing payment process and low reimbursement rates
- Validating and valuing the societal services that home child care providers fill
- Onerous responsibilities placed on providers to help families enroll in C4K
- Expanded training and educational opportunities
- Raising quality and standards of quality child care
- Concerns about health care expenses and coverage

It has been reported that we do not have enough child care providers to meet the growing need in the State. This Bill will enable providers to have a voice to address their concerns and possibly address the potential loss of providers due to economic challenges. Family childcare providers meet an essential need in our society and giving them a seat at the table can only strengthen the role they serve in preparing the children in their care for life ahead.

We look forward to working with you to address this important issue. Thank you for your consideration.

⁴ Sarah Esty & Cyd Oppenheimer, J.D, December 2011.